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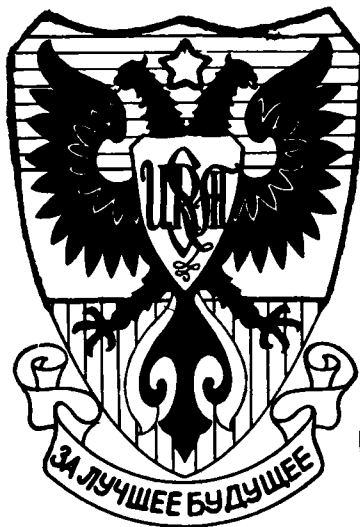
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STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
THROUGH SOVIET EYES

Edmund A. Klebe
1981

GARMISCH, GERMANY

APO NEW YORK 09053

(6) THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
THROUGH SOVIET EYES.

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FOR OPEN PUBLICATION

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DIRECTORATE FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
AND SECURITY REVIEW (OASD-PA)
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

US ARMY RUSSIAN INSTITUTE

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FOREWORD

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of the overseas phase of training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

Only unclassified sources are used in producing the research paper. The opinions, value judgements and conclusions expressed are those of the author and in no way reflect official policy of the United States Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, the US Army Intelligence and Security Command, or the Russian Institute. The completed paper is not to be reproduced in whole or in part without permission of the Commander, US Army Russian Institute, APO New York 09053.

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Geoffrey H. Kleb
GEOFFREY H. KLEB
LTC, MI
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In this essay, the author examines Soviet coverage of the US presidential elections of 1980 in an attempt to determine the main tendencies in Soviet propaganda treatment of elections in free countries. The conclusion is reached that there is, in fact, very little of substance in Soviet reporting of the elections; the main objective seeming to have been to obscure the US electoral process in order to alleviate the unfavorable contrast with the Soviet electoral process. ↑

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

THROUGH SOVIET EYES

Consider the dismal fate of the American worker: every four years, he is treated to the distasteful spectacle of a power struggle, ostensibly between the two major bourgeoisie parties, but in actuality between various groupings of the ruling monopolistic circles in the United States. The American working man, fearing the loss of his means of livelihood at any moment because of the unprecedented growth of inflation which has now reached double digit proportions, is cynically exhorted to cast a vote made meaningless because of the lack of any real difference between the presidential candidates of the major bourgeoisie parties. And not only that, but in a country where thousands and millions are living in the ghettos in abject and hopeless poverty because of the "lack of funds" to pay for urgently needed social programs, this same worker is forced to pay for this political show, since the two major bourgeoisie parties receive more than 29 million dollars each from the government treasury: that is, from the pocket of the working man.

Western political observers have openly expressed concern over the growing voter apathy in the United States, seeing in it a "threat to the democratic system". And, indeed, there is certainly ample cause for concern when only 52.8% of the voters eligible to cast ballots actually do so. But is it really so hard to determine the cause of this voter apathy? It would seem that any thinking person would be able to recognize the causes for this indifference. One need only to examine the

economic and social conditions in the United States to understand that the voters are increasingly coming to understand that in actual fact neither of the major parties is able to cope with the real issues confronting the United States. When J. Carter was running for the post of President in 1976, he promised that he would cut military spending, cut the rate of inflation and significantly reduce unemployment. Of course, the American voter put little faith in his promises -- they have long known that what is said in the fever of a campaign has little relationship with actual deeds once the White House is occupied -- but still there was a ray of despairing hope: after all, Carter was an "outsider" and was not part of the power elite. The facts of the matter are little known in the United States, and the bourgeoisie mass media carefully avoids any mention of the fact that Carter is a member of the Trilateral Commission and the Council on International Relations which were created and remain under the control of one of the groupings of the ruling power elite: the Rockefellers, Cabots, Mellons and DuPonts. Considering the monopolistic interests of this capitalistic coterie, is it any wonder that military armaments expenditures were not only not reduced, but sharply increased under the artificial myth of a "Soviet military threat"?

No, it is quite easy to determine the source of the voter apathy in the United States. Why should the American worker, after a long day's work, trek to the polling places to cast a ballot for a president who is going to ignore his wishes? As far as the worker is concerned, it is better to sit at home behind his double-locked and barred doors, than to risk being assaulted on the streets just in order to participate in this political farce.

The foregoing is a highly condensed distillation of the majority of Soviet media reportage of the American presidential elections of 1980. The reporting was characterized by an almost complete lack of substance, being aimed more at obscuring the real process of the elections, than at giving any information about how, in fact, the American electoral system functions. In this paper, I will try to examine the propaganda techniques used in the Soviet explanation of the American electoral system in order to elucidate some of the characteristic features of Soviet propaganda in general.

It is quite easy to see that the American electoral system poses some unique problems for the Soviet propaganda apparatus. In comparison with Soviet electoral procedure, elections in the western democratic countries are clearly superior, if only in that there is, indeed, a choice between and frequently among more than one candidate. This contrast is not lost on the Soviet citizen. To put this contrast in perspective a brief description of the Soviet electoral system is in order.

Article 96 of the Soviet constitution of 1977 stipulates that any citizen of the Soviet Union, having reached the age of 18 years, with the exception of those certified insane, may participate in elections and be elected to governmental organs except for the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for which candidates must have attained the age of 21. Article 100 of the constitution, however, sharply limits this eligibility by stipulating that:

The following shall have the right to nominate candidates:
branches and organizations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Trade Unions and the All Union Leninist Young Communist League; co-operatives and other public organizations; work collectives, and meetings of servicemen in their military units.¹

The above is, in itself, quite an indictment of the Soviet system. However, the contrast with free elections becomes even clearer in light of Article 6 of the constitution, which states that:

The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.²

The meaning of this last Article is, of course, that absolutely no organization empowered to nominate a candidate for public office can exist except with the approval and control of the Communist Party. But even if such an organization could exist, and should it manage to nominate a candidate, and should this candidate happen to be elected, there would be no effect whatsoever on the Soviet government. This is ensured by a further provision of Article 6 which states that:

The Communist Party determines the general perspective for the development of society, the line in internal and foreign policy of the USSR, guides the great creative activity of the Soviet people, (and) imparts a planned scientifically based character to its struggle for the victory of Communism.

Thus it is the Communist Party, and not the legislative governmental organs, that determines which laws will be passed, which countries will be treated in which manner, and how the society of the Soviet Union will be structured. It is also clearly stated that the Soviet people are constitutionally obligated to "struggle for the victory of Communism."

I will not go into the methods used to compel voter participation. It is sufficient to mention that the casting of a ballot is not a privilege but an obligation for the Soviet citizen, and that failure to perform this obligation engenders some rather unpleasant consequences.

The contrast is clear -- and not favorable for the Soviet system. In view of this, one may think that the Soviet Union would simply ignore these elections. However, because of the activities of broadcast stations

such as Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe, it is impossible to ignore elections in the West, since, no matter how much these stations are jammed, some information about the elections is sure to leak through. Another factor here is that elections in the West frequently entail a change in governmental policies and, consequently, intergovernmental relations. Thus, some explanation for these changes must be given.

It is also undesirable for the Soviet Union to ignore the elections because of two factors: the "loss of face" before the Third World, and ignoring any mention of the elections would simply emphasize the point that the Soviet electoral system is itself quite defective.

Thus, faced with the inevitability of reporting on free western elections, the Soviet Union has attempted to turn this reporting to its own advantage. Given the nature of free elections, this is not difficult for experienced propagandists.

It is, of course, self-evident that the supreme, basic task of Soviet propaganda is to influence world opinion in ways favorable to Soviet policy. From this it follows that, to some extent, the Soviet Union is even eager to report on these elections, since it provides grist for the propaganda mill. This is also conditioned by the hope of, at least to some extent, influencing the outcome of the elections, for the Soviet Union is quite well aware that the western press and many political observers attach great importance to Soviet reaction.

One of the basic methods used by Soviet propaganda is to obscure the facts about a particular subject. This becomes particularly evident in election coverage.

In the last American elections, the Soviet Union seemingly abandoned all hope of influencing the outcome at a comparatively early stage,

having reached the conclusion that the general election would be between Mr. Carter and Mr. Reagan. An article in the Soviet journal USA (SSha) for February 1980 (thus the article had passed censorship by mid January) appears to diminish Senator Kennedy's chances of gaining the nomination, not only by concentrating for the most part on Mr. Carter, but also by noting that: "On the minus side for E. Kennedy there are the well-known incidents concerning his private life, which are constantly being played up by the press, and his 'excessive liberalism.'" ⁴ California Governor Edmund Brown was dismissed in one paragraph. ⁵ A Radio Moscow broadcast of March 9 clearly hinted that Reagan was the probable future candidate for the Republican Party. ⁶

Being rather displeased not only by the probable candidates from both parties, but also by the probability, as they saw it, of a Reagan presidency, the Soviet propaganda organization concentrated its efforts on obscuring the facts of the electoral process and on trying to exploit what they saw as possible points of conflict between the United States and other countries of the world.

The predominant line for this effort at "wedge driving" was that Mr. Carter was artificially creating crises in the foreign affairs arena in an effort to distract the US voter's attention from domestic issues. In this line was an article in Trud, the Trade Union organ, of 15 April concerning the "metamorphosis" from a "god-fearing novice on the Washington scene" into a person who "without rhyme or reason declares that he 'brings not peace but the sword.'" Correspondent V. Sisnev states that Carter's actions are calculated to "help create an atmosphere of hysteria in a country which has to name its next president in a few months time. After all, in such an atmosphere it is harder for people,

for workers, to make a sober decision; it appears to them that you cannot change the helmsman of the ship of state at a moment of 'crisis.'"⁷

To drive the point home, the article goes on to quote a statement by Professor Arthur Schlesinger of New York University that:

'Nobody in the world can take seriously any foreign policy act by Carter, assuming that in a week's time it could be revised, reversed, disputed or forgotten. He is reviving the 'cold war' policy and counting on it to win him reelection to the White House.' In other words, in sailing the ship of state in zigzags, without a helmsman, as the saying goes, Carter is nonetheless guided by a kind of 'compass': the ambitious desire to keep his present address for another four years by any⁸ means, however dangerous to the nation and the entire world.

In a similar vein is the Radio Moscow broadcast of 9 April during which political observer Vladimir Nakoryakov, commenting on the dispatch of American naval vessels to the Persian gulf area, ascribes this to Mr. Carter's political ambitions:

The problem of the hostages which Carter has made into the main trump card in his pre-election game has been artificially stretched to include the United States' warlike maneuvers. Observers note that these steps are designed only to show the American people, that is the electorate, that the administration is taking concrete measures to get the hostages released.

Driving the wedge, Moscow deliberately used its propaganda apparatus to exacerbate the situation surrounding the American hostages, undoubtedly with a secondary aim of distracting world public opinion from Moscow's actions in Afghanistan. Thus, in the same radio broadcast quoted above, Nakoryakov charges that the United States was encouraging American "monopolies, firms and individual citizens, including the families of the hostages...to institute lawsuits against the Iranian Government in order that these may be met from the frozen assets. This means that the United States does not intend to return to Iran the riches which the fugitive shah took out of the country but, on the contrary, is trying to warm its hands on them."¹⁰

The broadcast goes on to contend that the present leadership in the United States was only interested in "protecting its imperialist interests and continuing the policy of blackmail against Iran and other countries in the region" and not at all interested in the release of the hostages "since, to obtain their release, it would only be necessary to examine and satisfy Iran's quite legitimate demands: first, to officially renounce the previous policy of interference in Iran's internal affairs, and second, to return to the Iranian people the billions plundered by the shah and taken out of the country."¹¹

This propaganda line that the Carter administration was artificially creating foreign policy crises in order to divert attention from US internal economic and social problems was well established by February 1980.

An article in the May 1980 issue of USA which had passed the censorship (sdano v nabor -- released for composition) by 12 March 1980 clearly shows this. After a generally accurate run down on statements made by Mr. Carter during his 1976 presidential campaign as opposed to actual performance as expressed by the state of the American economy, the article goes on to quote observations by unnamed American political observers that:

In the White House, there has been a whole series of feverish discussions of J. Carter's pre-election strategy for 1980. The role of 'the outsider', the person from the sidelines smashing the vices and weaknesses of the Washington elite, had clearly outlived its time. The strategy of the preceeding campaign of basically focusing on the internal problems, belonged to the past: it was impossible to stir up the memory of broken promises. And so, they worked out a new line, diametrically opposed to the previous one: this time it was decided to conduct the pre-election campaign under the slogan of not internal problems, but international problems. If problems capable of stirring up the average American were not in hand -- then they had to be created.¹²

After a vicious attack on Presidential Advisor Brzezinski as being the main source of all these evil machinations, the article goes on to describe the famous "Soviet brigade in Cuba" incident as a transparent attempt to stir up chauvinistic instincts in the American voters. In the words of the article: "this was the first shot in the pre-election campaign of president Carter. Even if the shot has missed the mark, it had nevertheless achieved the desired: the attention of Americans was for a time diverted from the mess of everyday life."¹³

The next action directed at undermining detente was the events in Iran, which were, according to the USA article, deliberately provoked by the Carter administration:

In the atmosphere of epidemic hysteria puzzling questions arose in connection with the November outbreak of the Irano-American conflict. First of all, why was the dethroned shah allowed -- or rather practically invited into the United States under the pretext of the need for a surgical operation? He certainly had sufficient stolen billions to afford to summon any surgeon he wished to any point on the earth. It was certainly not necessary to maintain a huge, wide spread diplomatic and intelligence apparatus in the Near East to accurately predict that with such burning hatred for the tyrant and executioner Mohamed Reza Pahlavi griping present day Iran, his appearance in New York was a provocative action which inevitably was sure to call forth an outbreak of indignation and the most serious consequences in Teheran."¹⁴

The implication of the above quote is, of course, that the Carter administration was quite well aware that the Shah's arrival in the United States would lead to such actions as the seizure of the US embassy and that this was exactly the type of crisis needed by the Carter administration to distract attention from domestic problems. The article later charges that the Carter administration also seized on the events in Afghanistan in an attempt to undermine detente. Using this as a starting point, the author asserts that Amin was a CIA agent who

seized power and assassinated Taraki. To prove this point the author alleges that the Taraki assassination was quite similar to "many" other murders which the authors lays at the feet of the CIA "from the liquidation of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo to the removal of general Rene Schneider in Chili." The author cites a US Senate committee report that: "government employees advocated the idea of organizing and also took part in plots aimed at the assassinations of Patrice Lumumba and Fidel Castro." The author notes that the committee report condemned such plots "in particular because 'such activities are almost sure to be exposed.'" Noting that President Ford had reacted to the report by stating that his administration would not participate in any assassination attempts, the author adds: "however, the Carter administration has shown on a number of occasions that it does not consider itself bound by the policies of previous administrations."¹⁵

The article concludes with a supposed dialogue between an American voter and the Carter Administration:

'How are things with unemployment?' asks the American voter.
Think about Iran. -- they answer.
When will we have an end to inflation? -- he asks.
Remember Afghanistan. -- they shout in answer.
This is the way president Carter's campaign is developing.'¹⁶

It is of course quite evident that the article has not in fact discussed any campaign strategy. The article merely served as a vehicle for routine Soviet propaganda. The only ideas advanced were a defense of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan under the pretext of opposing counter revolution inspired by the CIA; pandering to the Iranian militants and revolutionaries in an attempt to attract friendly relations with the Iranian revolutionary government; and an attempt to depict the

CIA as a terrorist organization whose assassination attempts are censured only because they are sure to be exposed.

From this article alone, one may clearly see one of the basic tenants of the theory and practice of propaganda: the facts of any given situation are not as important as the interpretation given or implied. Thus the quote from the Senate Committee report is used to imply that the United States government was actually engaged in the support of assassination attempts.

This "damnation by implication" technique clearly shows up in the biographical treatment of Mr. Reagan and Mr. Anderson. In the September 1980 issue of USA, Mr. Reagan is described as having been born into the "family of John Edward Reagan, an emigree from Ireland and a shoe merchant..." Reagan's mother was a "great fan of the theater and a participant in theatrical presentations." Reagan himself in high school:

Was an enthusiast (uvlekalsya) for football, basketball and participation in school plays. Having finished college in 1932, he became a sports commentator for a radio station... In 1937, Reagan's 'golden baritone' attracted the attention of an agent for the film company Warner Brothers and in the same year he was filmed in the role of a radio commentator. During the subsequent 33 years Reagan was filmed in more than 50 predominately adventure films... In April 1942 Reagan was drafted into the army, but was released from participation in combat because of weak eye sight. For almost his complete term of service,¹⁷ Reagan was occupied in making training films for the Air Force.

Compare this description with that of Mr. Anderson, whose views were favorably viewed by Moscow, which appeared in the October 1980 issue of USA:

John Bernard Anderson was born in 1922 in Rockford (Illinois) into a well-to-do family of emigrees from Sweden who were of conservative orientation. After finishing the University of his native state in 1942, Anderson entered the service. After the war he continued his education at Harvard University where he received a degree in law.¹⁸

The bias needs some exposition because the flavor of many words has been lost in translation. For example, the word "merchant" (torgovets) carries a quite pejorative connotation for the average Soviet citizen. Notice that while Mr. Reagan is implied to have devoted himself exclusively to football, basketball and amateur theatricals while in high school, Mr. Anderson's high school activities are not touched upon. While Mr. Reagan was "drafted", Mr. Anderson "entered the service." In connection with this, it may be helpful to note that both articles are accompanied by photographs. Mr. Anderson is wearing glasses, while Reagan, who is supposed to have "weak eye sight" is not. Another sidelight to this latter point is that during the war, many Soviet citizens who served in active combat were physically handicapped to a much greater degree, poor eye sight not being a valid reason for deferment.¹⁹

According to their biographies, both Reagan and Anderson changed their political views over the course of the years. The description of these changes is also instructive. Concerning Reagan:

In his autobiography Reagan reminisces: 'I was an almost fanatical liberal... In all elections, I voted Democratic, following the example of my father.' Reagan's liberal enthusiasm, however, did not last long. In 1947, 500 Hollywood cultural figures registered a sharp protest against the arbitrariness of the notorious Committee on Un-American activities, which had begun persecuting progressive actors and directors. Reagan was not among them. On the contrary, he turned up among those who willingly cooperated with the committee and readily gave testimony.²⁰

Concerning Anderson:

As Anderson gained experience as a professional politician, his positions on important issues began to acquire a moderate or moderate-liberal coloration. Although at first, Anderson had supported the expansion of American aggression in Vietnam, in 1970 he characterized American involvement as 'the most tragic military and diplomatic mistake in US history.' Anderson began to support legislation to increase federal aid to the education system and housing construction. He proposed to limit the military budget and to support the rights of black Americans.²¹

Thus while Reagan's "liberal enthusiasm" was soon over, Anderson's views gradually changed as "he gained experience." At the same time as Reagan is depicted as "cooperating" in "persecution" by a "hate group" committee, Anderson began to support an "increase in federal aid" and to "support the rights of black Americans."

If Anderson's "ability to clearly formulate the problem, and his candid style attracted attention and helped him to win the support of a certain segment of the intelligentsia and youth,"²² then Reagan's "bellicosity of the new born conservative was very much to the liking of the magnates of California, one of the richest states in the country because of its leading position in arms production."²³ This, of course, led "after the defeat...of B. Goldwater, who had enjoyed the unlimited support of California business interests, (to) the financial big game of San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego turning their gaze to Reagan, seeing in him a potential standard bearer of ultraconservatism. And "among those financing Reagan's election campaign (for Governor of California) was the California oil magnate Paul Getty."²⁴

One should particularly notice here, not just the adjectives used to describe Mr. Reagan, but also the emphasis on the segments of the population to which Mr. Reagan and Mr. Anderson appealed. Comparing the segment that Mr. Anderson is said to have appealed to, perhaps one should keep in mind Lenin's famous characterization of the "intelligentsia" to appreciate the full cynicism of this comparison.

Although these articles were written by different authors under the censorship existing in the Soviet media such a selective choice of biographical data is no accident.

There is an interesting sidelight to this comparison of biographies: during a Radio Moscow "International Observers Roundtable" discussion on 20 July 1980, one of the participants, Viktor Nikolaevich Levin, commenting on the results of a public opinion poll, stated:

Anderson...is putting himself forwards as an independent candidate -- but it is no secret to anyone that he is the Republican's gray horse who²⁵ is to pull some of the votes away from Carter and the Democrats.

Another interesting sidelight to this comparison of biographies requires a few preliminary words of explanation. The biography of Mr. Anderson published in USA for October 1980 also served as a vehicle for an attack on the US election system as a means of ensuring that third party candidates not be elected by depriving such candidates of adequate financial support. It should also be borne in mind that Soviet propaganda harped on the point that there was no substantive difference between Mr. Reagan and Mr. Carter. Typical of this approach is the article in USA for November 1980 which states: "practically speaking, the voters have no choice -- it's either an arms race (in the Republican manner) or an arms build up (by Carter)."²⁶

Now the interesting thing is, that according to the USA biography of Mr. Anderson, his views are quite moderate and rational when compared to Mr. Carter's views. However, in the October 24, 1980 issue of the foreign affairs weekly Novoe Vremya (New Times), correspondent Yu. Gudkov writes of Mr. Anderson:

If one were to judge by the political past of J. Anderson, one may think that he, just as J. Carter, appears (sic) on the political arena 'out of nowhere'. Such an impression is not in consonance with the facts. They are little known, and the mass media diligently avoids them, but they have decisive import. Just as J. Carter, 'independent' candidate Anderson is a member of the 'trilateral commission' and the 'Council on International Relations', organizations set up and run by a group of 'families'

of the East Coast -- the Rockefellers, Cabots, Mellons and DuPonts.

The article goes on to say that these families are one of the chief sources of campaign finances for "appropriate candidates" and that it is "well known" that six members of the "Rockefeller clan" donated to Anderson's campaign. Furthermore, "J. Anderson enjoyed such unanimous support with the 'big press' of the East Coast, that is with the newspapers the New York Times, the Washington Post, the magazines Time and News Week and even the television company CBS, that those unfriendly to Anderson are calling him a 'product of the mass media.'"²⁸

One of the interesting things about this is that it is difficult to see how Mr. Anderson can simultaneously be a "Republican gray horse" and a member of a power grouping that advanced the candidacy of Mr. Carter in 1976. Lest this latter point be insufficiently clear, let me direct the reader's attention to the October 1980 issue of Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' (International Life) which carried an article on presidential advisor Brzezinski.

The article gives a very short description of Brzezinski's childhood, saying that he early shocked his friends with his ambition to become president of Poland. After the Communist seizure of power in Poland, Brzezinski was forced to emigrate to Canada which did not suit his ambitions, so he moved to the United States and became a US citizen in 1958. The article continues that:

The 'land of great opportunities', which had bathed in the rays of postwar self-satisfaction and thought in the imperial terms of Truman and Dulles, promised a multitude of good things and hopes for just another seeker of a political career, and the frenzy of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism was a sort of balsam for his infected spirit. Here, of course, for a brand-new citizen, who

was not 100 per cent Yankee to boot, dreaming about the presidency would simply be absurd; but all the same...²⁹

Later the article states that Brzezinski's many books and articles "combined with his hatred for the socialist countries, appealed not only to the academic community" and Brzezinski began to climb the ladder of success. After participating in the Johnson and Humphrey presidential campaigns of 1964 and 1967, Brzezinski "was noted 'from above'". Then, to quote the article, "the 1976 election campaign proceeded without a hitch, and the new President, James Carter, chose Zbigniew Brzezinski as an advisor. Incidentally, was he chosen?"³⁰

In answer to the question, the article points out that:

In 1973, Chase Manhattan Bank head David Rockefeller had offered Brzezinski a job as Director of the private enterprise organization known as the Trilateral Commission. Its task was to substantiate in theory and implement in practice the idea of close cooperation among the three power centers of the capitalist world... In March 1979 the Italian journal Panorama reported that 'in 1973 Brzezinski, provided with funds by Rockefeller himself, set out on a hunt for talents who ought to be advanced to the American political arena', and that 'it was he who discovered Jimmy Carter'. Even Carter himself admitted that Brzezinski, as Director of the Trilateral Commission, was his main teacher on foreign policy issues. Thus it seems that both of them were chosen by the 'powerful of this world.'³¹

Later the article charges that soon after taking office, Mr. Carter was forced to "change his thoughts in a different direction" by the "forces which had brought Carter to power."³² The result of this forced change of thinking was that Mr. Carter broke all his campaign promises about the reduction of the military budget, the reduction of troops in South Korea and the removal of nuclear weapons from Korea.

It is interesting to speculate: If these "powerful of this world", being dissatisfied with Mr. Carter have a candidate such as Mr. Reagan whose policies "will mean a return to the 'cold war' as an anti-Soviet

militaristic program speaking of the unwillingness of its authors to come to grips with reality, with the changes which have taken place in the world in recent decades",³³ then why did they pick up Mr. Anderson and not simply support Mr. Reagan?

The answer to this is found in a Marxist-Leninist formulation which holds that the "monopolistic ruling elite" is not a monolithic structure, but is broken down into "groupings" which are constantly struggling among themselves in the attempt to seize political power which will be used for the accumulation of profit. This point will become clearer during the following discussion of how the Soviet propaganda machine handles the actual election process.

It has frequently been stated that elections in the United States are a demonstration of "democracy in action." This is based on the expression of the nation's will regarding who will be the executive power. The Soviet propaganda apparatus flatly denies this, insisting that in actual fact there is no real choice between candidates, but only an illusion of a choice, foisted off by the ruling elite on the working classes. Instructive in this respect is an article appearing only in the English language edition of Internation Affairs for May 1980. In this article Mike Davidow, a political reporter for the Communist party paper, Daily World, attributes the "get Kennedy" drive to a desire to "disperse a potential movement of grass-roots opposition to the ruinous foreign and domestic policies being pursued."³⁴ He goes on to write that:

Fearful of opening even the slightest avenue of opposition to such a course of action within and around one of its two parties, the US ruling elite, as in 1968, is determined to tighten the fixed rules of the 'game'. The two party 'debate' is to center around the fixed format: who can be tougher with the 'Russians'? The objective is not only to turn the clock back to the days of the cold war. It is to bury the bitter

lessons of the dirty war in Vietnam and to break out of the restraints imposed by the American people³⁵ against involvement in such shameful and costly adventures.

The article goes on to contend that an examination of the 1968 elections is in order to serve as a reminder of how the American two party system is manipulated. The 1968 elections are good examples because they "put our much vaunted democracy and particularly our two party system to the acid test. For the real test of democracy whether it is reflected in two, multiple or a single party system is: how does government respond to the will of the people?"³⁶ Perhaps this last quote is sufficient reason why this article appears only in the English language edition of the magazine.

The elections of 1968 were, of course, connected with the Vietnam war. Mr. Davidow uses this to prove that Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 because of a speech he made on April 4, 1967 condemning the Vietnam war, and states that this "hit home to millions of Americans the brutal extent to which powerful reactionary forces dominating the country and the government, were prepared to go."³⁷

Mr. Davidow then passes on to the McCarthy campaign which forced Lyndon Johnson to remove his candidacy, alleging that McCarthy's success prompted Robert Kennedy to enter the presidential race, because "among other things, channeling the growing rebellion in and around the Democratic Party into the orbit of the Kennedy machine would place it in more reliable hands"³⁸ since the Kennedy machine was linked with the top echelons of the Democratic Party.

Although Kennedy's campaign, being better financed and organized, quickly gained the lead, McCarthy was still a force to be reckoned with and the "prospect of an alliance of these two powerful movements

alarmed the dominant forces of monopoly who controlled both major parties."³⁹ This possible alliance threatened the "policy of pursuing the war in Vietnam and posed a serious challenge to their hand-picked candidate...Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey. On June 5, on the eve of his decisive victory in California, Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles. Two political leaders killed in two months signalized (sic) reaction's desperate efforts to behead the merging movements for peace and Black liberation."⁴⁰

Mr. Davidow explains the choice of Chicago as the site for the Democratic national convention as being dictated by the desire to turn it into an "armed camp" since "for the first time the ruling class faced a serious challenge in and around one of its two parties" and Mayor Richard Daley was eminently suited to transform "the site of the convention and Chicago itself, into Fort Daley... Daley's 'stormtroopers' conducted a bloody vendetta against newsmen and photographers. Peace demonstrators who had come from all over the US were savagely assaulted... Humphrey received his nomination over the broken heads of hundreds of peace demonstrators."⁴¹

In this way, according to Mr. Davidow, American youth had its illusions about American democracy shattered. And furthermore, the "controlled press which has degenerated into a press corps of big business and the chief center for anti-Sovietism, ideological subversion and outright psychological warfare, only tightens the situation."⁴²

Based on Mr. Davidow's article, which is, of course, directed to readers in the United States and especially to English speaking countries of the Third World, one can only reach the conclusion that far from having a viable two party system in the United States, there is

actually only one party -- that of the ruling class. The illusion of a viable two party system is actually a manifestation of a power struggle within the ruling class. The working class does not recognize this because the press is firmly under the thumb of the ruling class and can not report on the real state of affairs even if the ruling class should be so kind as to call off the stormtroopers who are beating up the press and other progressive forces. And, as in other articles, the theme is expressed that the United States is a country where terrorism flourishes since it is a major weapon in the hands of the ruling forces of reaction. The only question remaining is: why haven't they gotten around to Mr. Davidow?

This same general theme appears in an article in the September 1980 issue of Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' which characterizes elections thus:

The functioning of this institution even since anti-feudal times is connected with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, and served the rising bourgeoisie as a slogan in its struggle for political power. Adherence to this doctrine is also declared in the majority of presently existing bourgeois constitutions, but today it is ridiculous, of course, to say that the source of power in capitalist governments is the people. All the same the bourgeoisie does not renounce elections. They help to camouflage the mechanism of its dominance, and to hide it behind the facade of the 'will of the people.'⁴³

Extending this line of reasoning, the article goes on to contend that it is an inevitable part of the development of capitalist countries that politics will be transformed into a "form of business, subject to its laws and returning profit for capital investment."⁴⁴

However, one should not be deluded into thinking that there are only monetary motives involved here; indeed, there are purely political factors, dictated by historical necessity, involved:

The growth of the role of money in politics is dictated more and more by purely political reasons. The sharpening of the antagonism between imperialism which denies democracy and the masses

striving for democracy, which, according to V. I. Lenin, is characteristic of the imperialistic stage of development of capitalism, necessitates the possibility of a retreat, at a certain stage, by the forces of reaction and the strengthening of democratic⁴⁵ institutions, progressive principles of socio-political life.

However, this growing role of money in politics is also conditioned by the evolution of the "superstructure of bourgeoisie society", since "today political parties exert a great influence on all components of the state mechanism and serve as a very important lever of turning the economic power of the bourgeoisie into its political dominance, as the main channel through which money influences politics."⁴⁶

The significance of this is that strong political parties, in bourgeoisie states, are not an indication of democracy, but an indication of the increasing dominance of monopoly capitalism on the life of the state. Thus:

The interaction of money and politics is clearly felt in the functioning of such a traditional and very important institution of bourgeoisie democracy as elections. It is during elections that the struggle is being waged for the most advantageous positions to influence politics and to make⁴⁷ daily use of political institutions in the interest of monopolies.

This leads the author to the formulation that "the 'price' of a seat in parliament has reached very impressive sums" to imply that one "buys" a legislative position rather than being elected to one.

Saying that bourgeoisie politicians like to refer to some "objective circumstances causing the growth of campaign costs" such as the increase in the number of eligible voters (caused by the lowering of the voting age), the author charges that these same politicians keep silent about "the flippant attitude to election promises, the progressive bureaucratization of the party machines, the oligarchic nature of the leadership, the moral depravity of the party bosses" which has led to

a loss of faith and apathy on the part of the voters, which in turn leads to scandalously falling voter participation in the elections. This falling participation has made "it all the more necessary to step up their brainwashing, thus causing another spiral in campaign costs."⁴⁸

This spiraling of campaign costs has led to the imposition of limits to private donations. In the United States the ceiling for private individuals is \$25,000 a year for all candidates and \$1,000 per candidate during a single election campaign. For business, public and political organizations the ceiling is \$5,000 per candidate and there is a ban on cash donations in excess of \$100.⁴⁹ This use of a law passed to clean up some election campaign abuses to imply that the situation has simply become so bad that it could not be ignored anymore, is not a very effective propaganda line, since it somewhat contradicts the line that elections have been turned into a business enterprise. A more successful formulation appears in an article by V. Linnik in Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' for August 1980:

The laws regulating the procedure for financing third parties are also discriminatory. This year, candidates of the main bourgeois parties receive more than \$29 million each from the federal treasury for their electoral campaigns. Candidates of third parties, however, can only obtain federal subsidies after the election and provided they receive not less than five per cent of the votes in November. Individual contributions to the independent candidate's electoral fund are limited to \$1,000; for candidates of the two major parties, however, the contributions have a ceiling of \$20,000.⁵⁰

This same article mentions the various state registration requirements for third parties as also being discriminatory and states in part that "in North Carolina an independent nominee must gather 165,000 signatures for his name to be included in the election bulletin (i.e. he must gather more votes than some Democratic or Republican winners in the primaries)."⁵¹

This propaganda theme was also picked up in the October issue of the journal USA. After again emphasizing the difficulties involved in complying with various state registration laws, the article picks up the Federal Campaign Act:

The Federal Campaign Financing Law of 1974 is directly aimed against (independent) candidates and in support of the two party system. An independent candidate does not receive as do the candidates of the Republican and Democratic parties, the right to government financing of his campaign, no matter how popular he is. While contributions to the treasuries of the basic parties from private individuals may lawfully be up to 20,000 dollars, contributions to the treasury of an independent candidates are limited to 1,000 dollars. While the candidates from the two parties each receive 29.4 million dollars in government subsidies, the independent candidate for president has to be satisfied with purely individual contributions.⁵²

Another propaganda ploy involved the use of the Democratic Party rule about delegate voting at the national convention. This item came up in reporting about the "dump Carter" movement by the Kennedy forces. In the August 1980 issue of USA O. N. Anichkin writes that Kennedy supporters were determined to continue the fight for the Democratic nomination at the convention itself by emphasizing that Mr. Carter's recent decline in the public opinion polls and Kennedy's victories in the primaries in the large states clearly showed that Carter would surely lose in a contest against Reagan. The article then continues: "However, people are predicting that Kennedy supporters will run up against great difficulties in their attempts to free delegates from the obligation to vote for the previously determined candidate."⁵³

This theme is more clearly stated in the November issue of USA, where N. P. Popov writes that the low popularity of Mr. Carter combined with the "financial machinations of his brother" led to an attempt to "make the convention 'open' and put forth some other candidate." This attempt did not work out because:

Among the delegates to the convention, Carter supporters were in the majority. Being mostly non-professional political activists from the provinces, they were carefully selected during the primary elections on the basis of their dedication to the party leader; the President met and corresponded with them even after the 'primaries.'⁵⁴ (emphasis added)

The words "provinces" and "they were carefully selected" are not mere happenstance. It is quite well known to the Soviet citizen that Lenin and more blatantly Stalin always carefully selected delegates to Communist Party conventions.

In conclusion, perhaps a recapitulation of the main points of the Soviet propaganda presentation of the US election system is in order. Perhaps the best way to do this is to note the article in the August issue of Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn' by V. Linnik. This article appeared in the section of the magazine entitled "As Aid to the Lecturer" and is thus the line to be used by party agitators. According to Mr. Linnik's article the whole electoral process in the United States "boils down to emasculated, formal democracy. The voters are robbed of a real alternative, and the purpose of the election is ultimately to bar the emergence of anti-capitalist interests. During an election the ruling class essentially distributes state power between different groups in the ruling elite."⁵⁵

If the question of the primaries should come up, the answer is ready. The primaries "serve to limit the electorate's participation" since "only registered Democrats or Republicans being entitled to take part in them in almost all states...roughly one-third of the Americans of voting age, or the 'independent electors' are already excluded at this stage from the election campaign."⁵⁶ Besides this, the article continues, although there are a great many primaries, the first three

to five have decisive importance because the winners in these primaries always "retain their leadership to the end; primaries in the other states thus lose all meaning."⁵⁷

FOOTNOTES

¹Verkhovny Sovet SSSR, Konstitutsiya (osnovno zakon) Soyuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik, Moskva: Izdatel'stvo izvestiya Sovetov Narodnykh Deputatov SSSR, 1977.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴V. A. Savel'ev, "Ranniy Start Izbiratel'noy Kampanii," SShA, No. 2 (1980), p. 63.

⁵Ibid., p. 64.

⁶As reported by Soviet World Outlook, March 15, 1980, pp. 6-7.

⁷V. Sisnev, "Mezhdunarodnyy Obzor" (International Review), Trud, 15 April 1980, p. 3.

⁸Ibid.

⁹As reported by Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 10 April 1980, pp. A7-A8.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²B. P. Izakov, "Predvybornaya Strategiya Prezidenta," SShA, No. 5 (1980), p. 57.

¹³Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁷N. N. Glagolev, "Ronald Reygan -- Kandidat Respublikanskoy Partii," SShA, No. 9 (1980), p. 105.

¹⁸V. P. Savchenko, "Nezavisimyy Kandidat Dzhon Anderson," SShA, No. 10 (1980), p. 115.

¹⁹Based on personal reminiscences of Mr. Joseph J. Baritz, a former Soviet Army Staff Officer during World War II, now working at the United States Army Russian Institute, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Federal Republic of Germany.

- ²⁰ Glagolev, op. cit., p. 105.
- ²¹ Savchenko, op. cit., p. 115.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Glagolev, op. cit., p. 106.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ As reported by Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 21 July 1980, p. CC6.
- ²⁶ N. P. Popov, "K Itogam Predvybornoy Kampanii," SShA, No. 11 (1980), p. 64.
- ²⁷ Yu. Gudkov, "V Ozhidanii Izbavleniya," Novoe Vremya, 24 October 1980, p. 26.
- ²⁸ Ibid., p. 27.
- ²⁹ L. Kapustin, "'Big Zbig' i yego Kozyrnoy Tuz," Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn', No. 10 (1980), p. 118.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid., pp. 118-119.
- ³² Ibid., passim.
- ³³ Yu. Zakharov, "Vybory v SShA: Pered Finishem," Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn', No. 10 (1980), p. 57.
- ³⁴ M. Davidow, "The Real Value of Two Party Democracy," International Affairs, No. 5 (1980), p. 116.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid., p. 117.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid., p. 118.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 118-119.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid., p. 119.
- ⁴³ V. Danilenko, "Vybory Pod Sen'yu Denezhnogo Meshka," Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn', No. 9 (1980), p. 59.

- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 60.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 61.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 62.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 65.
- ⁵⁰ V. Linnik, "Prezidentskie Vybery v SShA," Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn', No. 8 (1980), p. 147.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., p. 146.
- ⁵² Savchenko, op. cit., p. 144.
- ⁵³ O. N. Anichkin, "Izbiratel'naya Kampaniya 1980 g.: Pered Reshayushchim Etapom," SShA, No. 8 (1980), p. 50.
- ⁵⁴ Popov, op. cit., p. 146.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.

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- _____, "Komu ne pisany zakony" (For Whom the Laws are not Written), Novoe Vremya, No. 35 (1980).
- _____, "Stavka Ronal'da Reygana" (Ronald Reagan's Bet), Novoe Vremya, No. 38 (1980).
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